

THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

s had begged Paris to let him close Tonkin to foreign aggression, omising that it would cost nothing if he were given a free hand, ychological defeatism in France, since the war of 1870, made the vermment chary of even the display of force. In addition, Hue had at ambassadors directly to Paris to plead the return of Cochinchina, d this also served as a check on the Admiral. Dupre was beginning to be discouraged when he heard of Dupuis³ ccessful navigation of the Red River, but the Metropole, with its ngenital fear of complications, at once formally ordered him to stain from armed intervention there. Dupre was, however, deter- ned to do so, and to use Dupuis as the opening wedge. In looking out for a leader for this delicate mission, Dupre's first choice was ancis Gamier.

Gander's career had been amazingly full for so young an officer. ; had participated in the Chinese campaigns, and he had conceived 5 Mekong exploratory expedition, although he had been thought > young to be given its command. When Lagree's death left him charge of it, he gave a political character to what had hitherto been ely a scientific and commercial expedition. Returning afterwards to ris, he distinguished himself during the siege and the Commune, ice again in the Far East, he was planning an exploration into tnan from Shanghai, when he received an urgent message from ipre asking him to return to Saigon for an important piece of work athing less than the conquest of Tonkin.

When Gamier and Dupre talked over the situation, they found mselves only in partial agreement. Gamier wanted no armed exp- ion: he thought that Tonkin was tired enough of Hue's adminis-

tion to submit spontaneously to him. Both agreed, however, as to

> importance of opening the Red River to commerce. Finally Gamier

•eed to take two hundred French soldiers and a few Annamites, and

sail at once for Hanoi. There is ample proof that it was the force

circumstances which gave a military turn to the expedition, and

tiast Garnier's expressed wiahes.

Phe open distrust of the officials at Hanoi was shown by their (itary preparations and a stream of aggressive proclamations. Gamier

>lied with an ultimatum, threatening to storm the citadel if the town re not immediately disarmed and the Red River opened to commerce—and incidentally to Dupuis, Their failure to reply brought

wit an amazingly rapid capture of the Hanoi fort without the loss a single French soldier. Equally swift successes were repeated